

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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R 301333Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 26

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 0953

BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MU, IR

SUBJECT: IRANIAN PRESS LAUDS ITS TROOPS IN OMAN

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. BOTH FARSI AND FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PRESS BEGINNING JAN. 28 HAVE CARRIED SERIES OF EXTENSIVE ARTICLES PUBLICIZING QTE DEFEAT UNQTE OF DHOFAR REBELS BY IRANIAN FORCES AND OMANI TROOPS. CENTRAL POINT IS THAT IRANIAN ACTION, TAKEN WHEN SULTAN'S APPEAL TO OTHERS FOR HELP WENT UNHEEDED, HAS FRUSTRATED PLANS OF POPULAR FRONT FOR LIBERATION OF OMAN (PFLO) AND COMMUNIST BACKERS TO CREATE QTE RED EMPIRE UNQTE ALONG SHORES OF ARABIAN SEA. KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL'S DEFENSE CORRESPONDENT SAID DHOFAR REBELS HAD LOST THEIR INITIATIVE FOR FIRST TIME IN OVER A DECADE AND CONCLUDED THAT THEIR DREAMS OF GAINING CONTROL OVER THE PENINSULA MUST BE ABANDONED.

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SEVERAL STORIES WERE WRITTEN BY MEMBERS OF A GROUP

OF CORRESPONDENTS WHICH TOURED IRANIAN OUTPOSTS IN OMAN THE PREVIOUS WEEK. CORRESPONDENTS WERE IMPRESSED WITH IRAN'S AIR LIFT OF 2,000 MEN AND THOUSANDS OF TONS OF SUPPLIES TO DHOFAR. PREDICTABLY, COVERAGE EMPHASIZED HIGH MORALE AND PROFICIENCY OF IRANIAN SOLDIERS. EXCELLENT CARE OF WOUNDED MEN WAS ALSO HIGHLIGHTED, BUT NO MENTION WAS MADE IN THESE PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THOSE KILLED IN ACTION. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. AP BUREAU CHIEF PARVIZ RAEIN, WHO WAS AMONG CORRESPONDENTS TO MAKE TOUR, TOLD POLICEMEN HE WAS GENUINELY SURPRISED AND IMPRESSED WITH ACHIEVEMENTS OF IRANIAN FORCES. HE SAID HE HAD INTERVIEWED CAPTIVE REBELS WHO TOLD HIM THEY HAD BEEN TRAINED BY RUSSIAN ADVISORS AND TOLD THEIR ULTIMATE MISSION WAS TO CAPTURE STRAIT OF HORMOZ. COMMENTING ON REBELS' MOTIVATION, RAEIN SAID THEY DID NOT SEEM TO KNOW WHAT THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR BUT WERE SIMPLY CARRYING OUT ORDERS.

3. COMMENT: GOI PRESS CAMPAIGN TO CELEBRATE IRANIAN CAPTURE OF RAKHYUT AND OTHER VICTORIES IS NO DOUBT AT LEAST PARTIALLY A REACTION TO RECENT UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY IN ARAB MEDIA WHICH BELITTLED PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN TROOPS AND CLAIMED THEY HAD FOUGHT POORLY BECAUSE THEY WERE FAR FROM HOME FIGHTING SOMEONE ELSE'S WAR. EARLIER IRANIAN PRESS COVERAGE ADMITTED TO SOME 20 SOLDIERS KILLED IN ACTION, BUT AT LEAST ONE IRANIAN JOURNALIST PLACES FIGURE AT MORE THAN 40. BRITISH EMBASSY SAYS KIA FIGURE IS IN 60 TO 70 RANGE. OPTIMISTIC PRESS COVERAGE IS UNDERSTANDABLE BUT MAY BACKFIRE IF IRANIANS SUSTAIN HEAVY CASUALTIES AS THEY HAVE IN SOME PAST OPERATIONS OR IF REBELS AGAIN SCORE SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES. SHAH AND HIS TOP MILITARY ADVISERS HAVE MORE BALANCED ASSESSMENT OF IRANIAN PERFORMANCE THAN PRESSMEN WHO MADE THIS GUIDED TOUR. THEY ARE KNOWN TO LOOK UPON OMANI OPERATIONS AS GOOD TRAINING AND TESTING GROUND FOR IRANIAN TROOPS IN WHICH SOME MISTAKES ARE BOUND TO BE MADE.

MIKLOS

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